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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY JULY 17-19, 2004

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for July 17-19, 2004. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

Radikal, Bolge: Abdullah Paksoy, the mayor of Elbistan, Kahramanmaraş province, claimed Afsin-Elbistan Power Plant's filter systems, which do not operate properly, caused environmental contamination. Mayor Aksoy said a study by the Cukurova University in Adana revealed that there had been an increase in cancer cases in the region. It is claimed that the rate of contamination caused by the plant is ten times higher than world standards.

Ulkede Ozgur Gundem, Hurriyet, Yeni Safak: In Siirt, approximately one thousand people (Hurriyet gives the demonstrators' figures as ten thousand) attended the "Terror Cursing Meeting" organized by the governor's office. It is alleged that villagers were forced to attend the meeting which was mainly attended by village guards, security officials, and members from Martyrs Families Association. The demonstrators carried signs critical of terror and PKK.

Ulkede Ozgur Gundem, Evrensel: In Derik, Mardin province, the Public Prosecutor filed charges against the Former Mardin DEHAP Vice Provincial Chairman Abdullah Akikol for delivering a speech in Kurdish during the March 21 Newroz Celebrations, and accused the Current mayor of Derik, Nuran Atli, of violating the Political Parties Law by making political propaganda.

Ulkede Ozgur Gundem, Vakit, Yeni Safak: In Adana, pro-Ocalan slogans were shouted during a Kurdish Concert at Mimar Sinan Ope-Air Theatre. A young girls carrying "We are Kurds. Our Leader is Ocalan" banner appeared on the stage. Banners reading "No to isolation, Freedom for Ocalan" were arrayed. Security was provided by a private security company. Police did not intervene in the incidents.

Sabah: The State built a total of 756 houses, 540 between Diyarbakir and Batman, 150 in Alibey village of Bitlis, and 66 in Tepe Konak village, Diyarbakir province, for resettling the 25,000 nomadic Beritanlilar tribe in East and Southeast Turkey. Almost half of Beritanlilar tribe, which has been living a nomadic life for 300 years, got settled in Diyarbakir, Bingol, and Elazig provinces with their own financial means some years ago. The construction of the houses started in 1994.

Ulkede Ozgur Gundem: Three HPG (Public Defense Forces) members who were reported as having been killed during clashes in rural Mus were allegedly tortured and their ears were amputated after their death. Mus Municipality buried the killed militants together in a mass grave. Jandarma prevented filming the burial. DEHAP Mus Provincial Chairman Abdalbaki Celebi said dismembering of the dead body could not be explained in any religion and the perpetrators should be brought before the court.

Ulkede Ozgur Gundem: In Sanliurfa, the court filed charges against Omer Kurt, the director of the Private Urfa Kurdish School which was opened on March 13, 2004, for putting up the "Private Urfa Kurdish Language and Accents Teaching Center" sign before the name of the school was endorsed. Kurt faces an imprisonment sentence varying from six months to two years.

Ulkede Ozgur Gundem, Evrensel: The Karadeniz Toptan Electric Power Plant (Silopi, Sirnak province) has been causing an increase in diseases due to its gas emission. Villagers claimed that there had been about 40 premature deliveries. They also claim approximately 700 animals have died due to poisonous gas.

Approximately 8000 people have undersigned the anti-power plant erection campaign launched by the civil initiatives.

Ulkede Ozgur Gundem, Yeni Safak, Tercuman, Evrensel, Turkiye: The Turkish Parliament endorsed the bill envisioning paying indemnities to terror victims. The bill accepts July 19, 1987, the date OHAL (State of Emergency), as the effective date for benefiting from the law. People who have suffered during incidents which occurred under Terror and Counter-Terror Struggle and activities carried out for that purpose will become eligible for indemnities. The losses of the people who have been accused of and convicted for assisting and harboring an outlawed organization will not be covered under the law. The victims or their heirs have to apply within one year to benefit from this bill.

Tercuman: 147 employees and 253 temporary workers at Hakkari Municipality undertook a sit-in demonstration for their unpaid salaries for fourteen months. Bisar Mavigoz said that the Hakkari Municipality's debts amounted to 20 trillion Turkish Liras (Approximately \$13.3 million).

Cumhuriyet: HAK-PAR, The Rights and Freedoms

Party, for which the Constitutional Court has pressed charges demanding its closure, said in addition to Turkish, the Kurdish language should be used as the official language in communication and education in the densely Kurdish populated regions.

Sabah: Two policemen from Van Security

Directorate tried to extort money from a businessman in Van by accusing him of involvement in drug trafficking. The extorters were arrested in a joint operation by Van province police.

Evrensel: Jandarma from Suveren Jandarma Station

in Bingol province have been applying a food embargo in Doganli and Dedebag villages of Genc for about a month.

Bolge, Turkiye:: The police from Adana Security

Directorate seized 240,000 Captagon pills in a Bulgarian plated car at the Pozanti-Adana highway toll booth. Five persons having connections with the pills were detained.

Vakit: A group of shopkeepers complaining about

frequent power surges in Kiziltepe, Mardin province, protested TEDAS, Electric Distribution Company. The shopkeepers visited the sub-governor and expressed their complaints to him. TEDAS official said because of unregistered use of electricity in the region, the overloaded transmission lines were damaged badly, and they were trying to fix the problem. Similar demonstrations took place in Sanliurfa and Viransehir as well. Sanliurfa Security Directorate announced that a group of militants had infiltrated among the farmers who were protesting the power cuts in Viransehir.

Cumhuriyet, Yeni Safak, Hurriyet: A march

protesting terror was undertaken by citizens, non-governmental organizations, and sixteen political parties in Savur, Mardin province, following the Friday prayer.

Cumhuriyet: N.T and V.Y initialed persons selling

Abdullah Ocalan's unregistered book titled "Defending a People" were arrested in Diyarbakir. The detainees, who asked for legal assistance from the Bar Association, were released after a deposition was taken from them.

Yeni Safak: Diyarbakir Provincial National

Education Director Bahattin Atilla said they would build 650 schools in villages and townships throughout the province and thus put an end to transport education.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

Turkiye, Hurriyet, Ekspres, Bolge, Milliyet,

Sabah (Guney Supplement): While the works for connecting natural gas to Adana's Industrial Zone are intensified, the issue of producing electricity from natural gas was discussed with the General Electric Power Systems authorities in the Adana Governor's office. The General Electric Power Systems has been erecting power plants in industrial zones in Turkey since 1996.

Yeni Safak: The Gaziantep-Mersin Natural Gas

Transmission Line which started in 2002 will be completed by the end of 2004. Priority for using the natural gas will be given to Organized Industrial Zones, and settlement units along the transmission line. The cost for the project is \$55.889 million.